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# 'Who is responsible?' asks the French press

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French political leaders and the French press, in the wake of Premier Laurent Fabius' stunning admission that French spies blew up the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior, demanded to know yesterday who gave the order for the July 10 attack.

Mr. Fabius' announcement came two days after the resignation of Defense Minister Charles Hernu and the firing of Adm. Pierre Lacoste, head of the General Directorate for External Security.

The Rainbow Warrior, on a mission to monitor French nuclear tests, was sunk in Auckland, New Zealand, killing a Portuguese photographer. Two French agents of the DGSE, then headed by Adm. Lacoste, are awaiting trial there on charges of murder and conspiracy. Three other agents are being sought.

Paul Quiles, newly appointed defense minister, "discovered in two days what the powers were unable to find out in two months," wrote *Le Monde*.

However, Europe 1, France's second largest radio station, reported Saturday that, one day after he became defense minister, Mr. Quiles learned that "essential pieces" of the DGSE dossier on the Greenpeace operation had been destroyed. The station cited well-placed sources close to the Defense Ministry.

The news agency Agence France-Presse made its own own confirmation of the claim by "good sources."

But *Le Monde*, which has made numerous revelations about the Greenpeace operation during the past month, did not carry such a report.

The Defense Ministry made no comment on the dossier report.

With the exception of the communist daily, *L'Humanite* — to which Mr. Hernu was little more than a bomb-rattling warmonger — virtually all French newspapers, whether of the left or the right, have expressed praise, pity or sorrow for the outgoing defense minister. Not normally inclined to lavish praise on Socialist politicians, the right-wing newsletter editor, Paul DeHeme, even wrote yesterday that "Hernu was made to resign for the crime of patriotism."

There has been far less unanimity

over Premier Fabius' painful decision to admit publicly French responsibility for the bombing New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange has denounced as "a sordid act of international state-backed terrorism."

"Bravo," exclaimed the somewhat left-wing daily, *Liberation*, which, though anti-Soviet, has been sympathetic to the ecological cause of the Greenpeace anti-atomic test crusade. But after praising Defense Minister Paul Quiles for moving the investigation ahead in a short time, it repeated the question everyone is now asking: "Who gave the order for the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior?"

Jacques Jacquet-Francillon, in a front-page editorial in the conservative *Le Figaro*, expressed the opinion that Charles Hernu and Admiral Lacoste were the victims of "a clever manipulation by certain newspapers." He concluded: "If the powers that be think they have put an end to the affair, they are cruelly mistaken."

Equally dissatisfied was Philippe Tesson, the trenchant editor of the daily *Quotidien* of Paris, who also demanded to know who gave the order to bomb the ship.

Whether "the capital question," as Mr. Tesson put it, will be answered by a parliamentary inquiry, as Premier Fabius has promised, is a moot question. Such parliamentary committees in the past have served to confuse rather than shed light on past scandals.

A great deal is going to depend on the behavior of Gen. Jean Saulnier, the present chief of the joint three-services staff, who is known to have OK'd the disbursement of the secret funds needed for the various phases of the anti-Greenpeace operation. Described by *Le Figaro's* military correspondent, Pierre Darcourt, as a "secret and intelligent military man," Gen. Saulnier, when he was President Mitterrand's personal adviser at the Elysee, "may not have been kept informed of all the details of the operation."

"But he could not have been ignorant of the scope and the final objective of the operation launched to block the 'aggressive' initiatives of Greenpeace," wrote Mr. Darcourt, of which, it can be assumed, he kept Mr. Mitterrand properly informed.

For the moment there is slight difference in emphasis in the aims of the opposition leaders. Those

belonging to Jacques Chirac's neo-Gaullist RPR favor an onslaught against Premier Fabius, while followers of former President Giscard's conservative UDF — and particularly its young wolves — prefer to focus on Francois Mitterrand's responsibility.

Given their close personal friendship, it is possible that Mr. Hernu may have received wide discretionary authority in dealing with Greenpeace by Mr. Mitterrand without Laurent Fabius' having been specifically informed.

Attempts to insulate the young premier from any taint of foreknowledge are now being made in several quarters, notably by *Le Monde*. In its final edition yesterday, one of its correspondents noted that Louis Schweitzer, the financial expert in the prime minister's office entrusted with the disbursement of secret funds, "was not personally inclined to deal personally with this kind of dossier."

"It is difficult to believe that the initiative to sink the Rainbow Warrior was taken without consultation of the state's high authority," George Marchias, leader of the French Communist Party, said in a statement. "The whole truth can only come from the president of the republic and the prime minister."

The president of Greenpeace-France, Francois Breteau, told a news conference that it was not vital to the organization to know who ordered the sinking. He said the essential question was indemnity for the family of Fernando Pereira, the photographer killed in the attack, and for the uninsured Rainbow Warrior.

Meanwhile, Mr. Fabius told New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange that he was "distressed that this affair has had consequences on the relations between France and New Zealand," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said yesterday.

Mr. Lange has asked for the extradition of the men who mined the Rainbow Warrior and payment of damages. He said yesterday that French expressions of regret over the Rainbow Warrior scandal fell well short of the formal apology demanded by both New Zealand and Australia.

In London yesterday, the British government offered Greenpeace "appropriate diplomatic support in any claim" the environmental group may file against France for attack against its flagship, a Foreign Office spokesman said.

Greenpeace has its headquarters in Britain and the Rainbow Warrior was a British-registered ship.

*This article is based in part on wire service reports.*